

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TRIPOL 00283 231532Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 MCE-00 OMB-01 TRSE-00 IGA-02
AID-05 EB-08 ACDA-12 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15
CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00 L-03 /079 W
-----000412 231541Z /47

P 231455Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5197

C O N F I D E N T I A L TRIPOLI 0283

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, EAIR, LY
SUBJECT: SALES OF AIRCRAFT AND SERVICES TO LIBYA

REF: TRIPOLI 0263

1. LOCKHEED TEAM CHIEF WEST HAS INFORMED EMBASSY OF HIS CONVERSATIONS SINCE THE WEEKEND WITH LIBYAN AIR FORCE COMMANDER FARJANI. FARJANI CONTINUES TO TAKE THE LINE THAT LOCKHEED GROUP HERE IS NOT TO BLAME FOR WHAT USG HAS DONE AND RELATIONS BETWEEN LAF AND GROUP REMAIN FRIENDLY. ALTHOUGH LOCKHEED U.S. HAS HAD SOME CONCERN OVER SAFETY OF GROUP, WEST SAYS HE HAS NO REASON TO FEAR TEAM WILL NOT BE ABLE TO LEAVE COUNTRY FREELY AT END OF CONTRACT MARCH 31. WEST SAYS PERSONNEL IN BACHELOR STATUS WILL LEAVE DURING FIRST TEN DAYS OF APRIL, THOSE IN FAMILY STATUS WILL BE ALLOWED UNTIL END OF APRIL TO WIND UP PERSONAL AFFAIRS, AND TWO OR THREE WILL REMAIN UNTIL MID-MAY TO FINISH SHUTTING DOWN THE ESTABLISHMENT. MOST PERSONNEL ALREADY IN POSSESSION OF EXIT VISAS.

2. WEST REPORTS FARJANI STATEMENT, PERHAPS REFLECTING VIEWS OF QADHAFI WHO WAS INFORMED OF DEPARTMENT'S DECISION ON FEBRUARY 18, THAT DECISION IS RESULT OF SADAT'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON. FARJANI SAYS TIMING WAS CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 TRIPOL 00283 231532Z

MOST UNFORTUNATE SINCE LIBYANS WERE ON THE VERGE OF SENDING A HIGH LEVEL DELEGATION TO WASHINGTON TO "DISCUSS ALL PROBLEMS" AT TIME OF ANNOUNCEMENT. FARJANI HAS TOLD WEST HE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND WASHINGTON'S ACTION, RECITING AT LENGTH THAT LIBYA IS NOT PRO-COMMUNIST, IN SPITE OF THEIR MANY DEALINGS WITH THE RUSSIANS, AND KEEPS THE RUSSIANS AT ARM'S LENGTH. HE

POINTED TO ABSENCE OF RUSSIAN ADVISERS IN LIBYAN MILITARY OFFICES, ABSENCE OF RUSSIANS AROUND UQBA BIN NAFI AIRBASE, AND SAID HE HAD KEPT MIGS AND RUSSIAN PERSONNEL AWAY FROM THE OPERATIONS AGAINST EGYPT LAST SUMMER. FARJANI SAID U.S. ACTION WAS AN INSULT, BUT THAT SUBSTANTIVELY EIGHT AIRCRAFT DON'T AMOUNT TO MUCH AND LIBYANS WILL BE RECEIVING IL-76'S FROM RUSSIANS NEXT YEAR.

3. ON 23 FEBRUARY FARJANI ASKED WEST IF HE HAD HEARD OF ANY REACTION TO A LETTER WHICH THE LIBYANS ALLEGEDLY HAD SENT TO WASHINGTON (ADDRESSEE, TIMING AND MODE UNCLEAR) IN REACTION TO DEPARTMENT'S DECISION. LETTER REPORTEDLY SAID LIBYA WAS SURPRISED THAT A POWER LIKE U.S. WOULD TAKE SUCH AN ACTION AGAINST A THIRD-WORLD COUNTRY HAVING A PROVEN ANTI-COMMUNIST RECORD, AND CITES ANTI-COMMUNIST ACTIONS. THE LETTER REPORTEDLY MADE SOME REFERENCE TO THE AMERICAN COMMERCIAL PRESENCE IN LIBYA AND NOTED OR IMPLIED THAT LIBYA HAD THE SAY ON HOW LONG AMERICANS REMAIN HERE AND THUS IS NOT WITHOUT CARDS TO PLAY. WEST'S IMPRESSION FROM FARJANI'S RECITATION WAS THAT THIS PASSAGE DID NOT CONSTITUTE A THREAT BUT MERELY AN OBSERVATION. FROM FARJANI'S OVERALL REMARKS, WEST GOT NO INDICATION THAT ANY KIND OF RETALIATION WAS IN THE WIND.

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PAGE 03 TRIPOL 00283 231532Z

4. DURING THE WEEK WE HAVE BRIEFED LEADING AMERICANS IN TRIPOLI ON DEPARTMENT DECISION. NONE OF THEM LIKED THE DECISION, BUT THERE IS NO SENSE OF ALARM. SOME WONDERED IF OUR NEXT STEP WOULD BE TO CUT OFF SPARE PARTS FOR LIBYAN AIRLINES 727'S.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SALES, AIRCRAFT, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978TRIPOL00283
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780084-0352
Format: TEL
From: TRIPOLI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780220/aaaaaqkk.tel
Line Count: 100
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 5a2d08d1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 TRIPOLI 263
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3498274
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SALES OF AIRCRAFT AND SERVICES TO LIBYA
TAGS: MASS, EAIR, LY
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/5a2d08d1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014